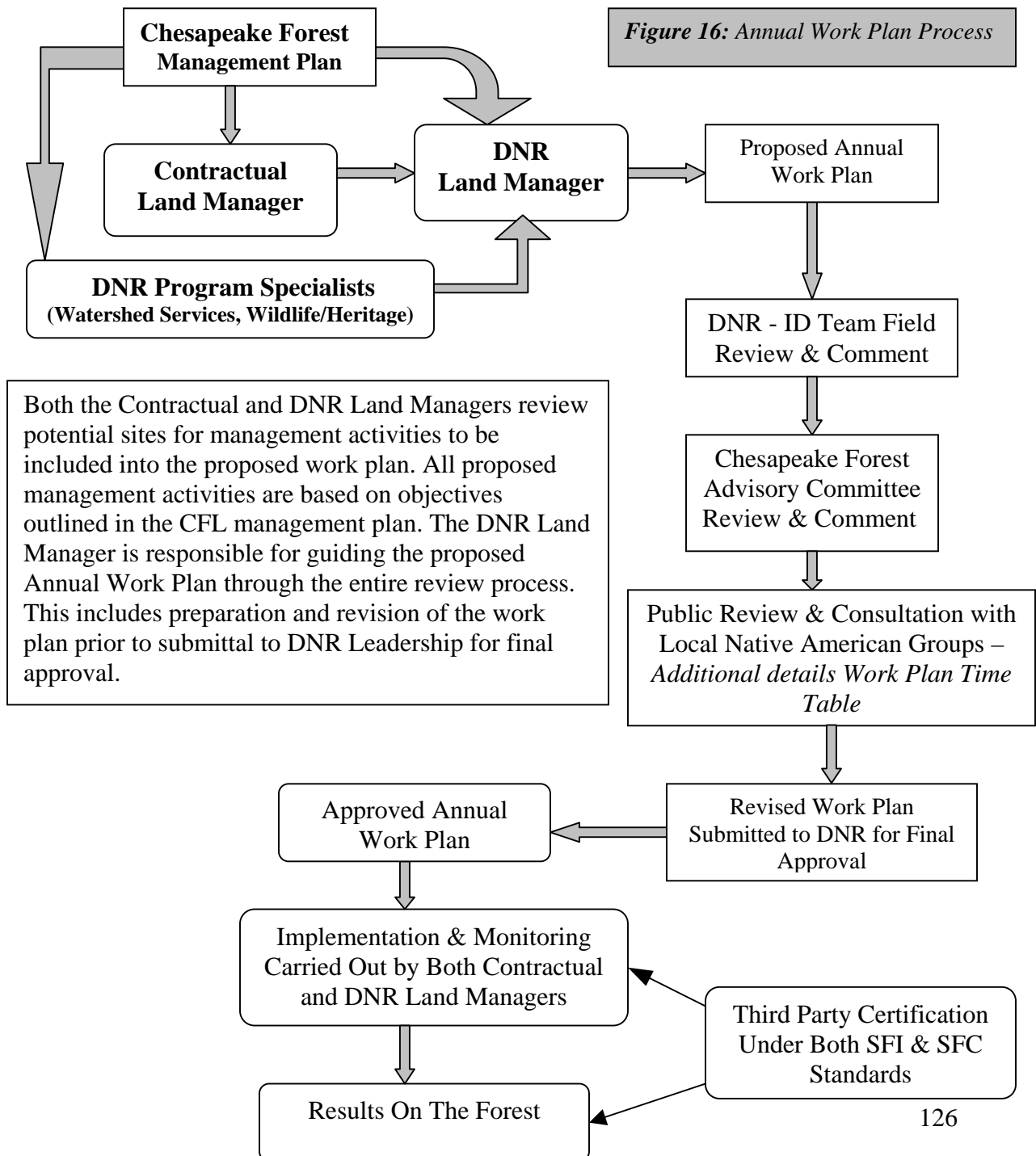


## Chapter - 11

### The Annual Work Plan

## 1. Annual Work Plan

The Annual Work Plan (AWP) will be the controlling document to assure that the Land Managers (both Contractual and DNR) effectively carry out the sustainable management plan for the land, and that the Department is fully informed and supportive of the management actions planned and taken. The MD DNR Land Manager is responsible for preparation of the Annual Work Plan. Figure 16 depicts the process used in the development of the Annual Work Plan.



The concept of an annual work plan that establishes the land management program for an entire year is an important key to successful implementation of sustainable forest management on Chesapeake Forest Lands. The amount of work that needs to be done, coupled with the tendency of Eastern Shore soils to be too wet at times to support equipment without soil or water damage, means that the Land Managers must be able to plan and schedule work well ahead of time, arrange for sub-contractors, and be ready to move rapidly when weather and soil conditions are favorable. If each individual project required separate agency review and approval, the chances of the procedural calendar and the work calendar coming into conflict escalate. If this occurred, the likely casualty would be the timely completion of fieldwork that could adversely affect the goals of the Chesapeake Forest Plan.

Figure 16 shows how achieving desirable on-the-ground results, which are the key outcomes of this plan, requires the cooperation of a variety of players. Several parties are involved in the process, all with key roles, but the persons central to all implementation, monitoring and reporting are the Land Managers. In this process, the lines of responsibility essential for success are clearly defined. The Land Managers are responsible for implementing the Annual Work Plan in a manner that is both environmentally and fiscally responsible. Quarterly reports submitted by the contractual Land Manager to DNR maintain a constant flow of information so that problems can be quickly identified and addressed.

Once implementation is underway, the ongoing process of carrying out forest management activities will result in changes in on-the-land conditions, as well as new information gathered. The on-ground results will be verified by a third party certification process, which will be conducted every 3-5 years. Certification is done to compare the achieved results with the planned outcomes of the management prescriptions contained in this plan and the Annual Work Plans. The independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditors will report their findings to the Land Managers. Where field or operational deficiencies are noted, it will be the responsibility of the Land Managers to correct them. Any deficiencies identified in the management plan or its goals, will be addressed by Maryland DNR. The audit report, and any subsequent actions taken, will be available to the public.

Implementing the Chesapeake Forest plan involves adaptive management, where research and monitoring are given a high priority, and new information is constantly gathered to feed back into the basic data management system and all future plans. The Land Managers are responsible for reporting key findings as well as maintaining a constantly-updated data management system that is always available for making forecasts, guiding management decisions, and providing a current information base that can support plan reviews or amendments in the future.

## **2. Annual Work Plan Timetable (Tentative)**

Annual Work plan development along with the necessary environmental and regulatory reviews will strive to follow the following process/time lines:

- The Contractual and DNR Land Managers begin fieldwork to review sites to be included in the next annual work plan from November through February.
- The DNR Land Manager drafts a proposed work plan and sends it for ID Team review by March 31.

- The DNR – ID Team reviews the proposed plan, a field review of proposed activities in the work plan is scheduled and comments returned to the DNR Land Manager by August 31.
- The DNR Land Manager presents the proposed work plan to the Chesapeake Forest Citizens Advisory Committee for comment and review and then holds a meeting for Public Review and Comment, process to be completed by October 31.
- This above process includes consultation/review with local Native American Groups and the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs concerning potential sites of special cultural, ecological, economic, or religious significance.
- The DNR Land Manager reacts to needed changes and submits a revised plan to DNR Headquarters by December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The DNR obtains final official approval of the Annual Work Plan, as revised, by February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Land Managers begin implementing the approved Work Plan July 1.
- Independent Third-Party Auditing for forest certification begins after the year ends and is repeated every 3-5 years, depending on certification requirements.

***Contents of the Annual Work Plan will include:***

1. Identification of proposed silvicultural activity for the year, including stands to be thinned or harvested, fertilized, sprayed, burned, or otherwise treated;
2. Identification of areas to be planted or treated to achieve reforestation;
3. Identification of special areas to be treated for improvement of watershed or wildlife habitat conditions, establishment or improvement of water quality zones or wildlife buffers, or other special areas; and,
4. Identification of recreational, maintenance, monitoring, and any other special projects that are proposed.

The Annual Work Plan will contain a proposed budget for the year, including revenue and cost estimates for all proposed activities. The Land Managers will be responsible for overseeing all activities to insure the desired environmental and silvicultural result, while maintaining cost effectiveness and targeted economic returns.

